

Meeting Date: March 6, 2008

Agenda Item No. 7

Agenda Item: Mule Deer Management Plan (Action)

Approved by: ____

Prepared by: Brad Compton & Randy Smith

Background:

In 2006 the Department began revising the Idaho Mule Deer Management Plan. Central to this revision was a statewide mule deer hunter survey conducted by the University of Idaho. Results from the public survey were used to draft proposed statewide direction for mule deer management. Incorporating input from regional public meetings ('sounding boards'), the Department developed a draft for Commission review in November.

Between mid-November and December 31, the Department solicited public comment on the draft plan and modified the plan in early January. In January 2008, the Commission delayed adoption of the plan to allow additional refinement and review by the public.

Department staff refined the January draft to incorporate Commission direction including:

- 1) clarified the 2008 rules will be annual; and indicating biennial rules are a goal to be considered in future years
- 2) established a goal of ≥ 15 bucks per 100 does in general hunt units
- 3) clarified that no specific management tools are prescribed in the plan; allowing Commission flexibility
- 4) modified predator management language to mimic language used in the new 10(j) rule

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Species management plans provide overall direction to the Department, and functionally represent "action plans" referenced in the Department strategic plan (*The Compass*). Species management plans don't have statutory or administrative rule authority, but do represent Commission policy and provide guidance to the Department on implementing management actions and developing rule recommendations.

Public Involvement Process:

The statewide mule deer hunter survey provided the initial opportunity for public involvement. Additionally, the Department hosted several regional meetings ('sounding boards') to solicit feedback for preparation of the draft management plan. The Department also hosted a Mule Deer Workshop in Pocatello, with many of the comments used to shape the draft plan.

All regions provided opportunities (breakfast meetings, open houses, or public meetings) to comment on the draft mule deer management plan. Additionally, the Department made the plan available through the website for public review and comment.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends adoption of the "Idaho Mule Deer Management Plan, 2008-2017."

Justification:

Formal adoption by the Commission is required to implement new direction for mule deer management.